United Nations S/2015/391

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 May 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 28 May 2015 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twentieth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 April to 21 May 2015.

On the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, I am pleased to note that the export licence for the explosives required to destroy the five hangars has now been issued and that the delivery of these explosives is expected to take place by mid-June. I also note that the installation of monitoring equipment at the first of the four accessible underground structures will take place at the end of this month. I regret, however, that the prevailing security situation continues to render one underground structure and two hangars inaccessible.

There is continuing dialogue between OPCW technical experts and the Syrian authorities with regard to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent amendments, and the Declaration Assessment Team of OPCW is currently undertaking its ninth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its clarification of outstanding issues. I welcome the continued consultations between OPCW and the Syrian authorities, and reiterate my previous calls for ongoing cooperation in this regard.

The work of the fact-finding mission that is looking into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is also continuing and OPCW experts are closely examining all available information. I note that the fact-finding mission that is looking into allegations brought to the attention of the Director-General of OPCW by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is preparing to deploy imminently to Damascus. Such a deployment follows agreement to that end that has now been reached between OPCW and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In spite of such progress, however, I must express my continuing and deepest regret that allegations of the use of these weapons have not ceased, even since the time of my last letter on this subject. This is utterly deplorable. There can be no excuse or justification whatsoever for the use of such weapons.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex urgently to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) BAN Ki-moon

15-08446 (E) 290515

Please recycle

Annex

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Council. My report covers the period from 23 April to 21 May 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements contained in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).

4. This, the twentieth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 April to 21 May 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress within the reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) With respect to the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) (seven aircraft hangars and five underground structures) in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of four underground structures, as previously reported. Five hangars are now ready to accommodate the explosives, for which the supplier has received the export licence and anticipates delivery in mid-June. While the security situation continues to preclude safe access to one underground structure and two hangars, the contractors have made measurable but sporadic progress, during brief periods of stability, in preparing the underground structure and one of the hangars for destruction.

(b) On 15 May 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its eighteenth monthly report (EC-79/P/NAT.2, dated 15 May 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1 (e) of EC-M-

33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all declared chemicals have been removed from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, and all declared stocks of the Category 1 chemicals have been destroyed. A total of 93.6% of the Category 2 chemicals has now been destroyed, representing a combined total of 98.7% of all chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, including the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic. The status of the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical (hydrogen fluoride (HF)) and effluents is as follows:

(a) A total of 47.7% of the HF has been destroyed. Mexichem UK Limited in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has completed destruction of its allocated quantity of HF. With a viable option now identified, the destruction activities at Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America will resume soon after the arrangements to safely process the corroded HF cylinders have been finalised. Veolia has implemented interim measures to safely store the HF cylinders until such time as they can be processed.

(b) Of the DF and HD effluent produced by the neutralisation process on board the United States vessel MV Cape Ray, Ekokem in Finland has destroyed a total of 82.2% of the DF effluent and is expected to have completed the destruction by the end of June 2015. The GEKA facility in Germany has now completed the destruction of the HD effluent.

7. The Secretariat will continue to brief States Parties in The Hague on the aforementioned destruction activities. Timelines for the completion of the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons were provided in the overall report on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme (paragraph 25 of EC-76/DG.16, dated 4 July 2014), which was noted by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

8. In the context of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has continued and eleven OPCW staff members were deployed as part of that Mission as at the cut-off date of this report. Ambassador José Artur Denot Medeiros of Brazil, as the Special Adviser to the Director-General on Syria, continued his meetings with senior Syrian officials, UNOPS staff, and the United Nations Designated Official in Syria during his visit from 10 to 12 May 2015.

9. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

10. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have continued to cooperate on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014). The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), having completed its eighth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic as previously reported, issued a Note entitled "Fourth Status Report of the Activities of the Declaration Assessment Team," (EC-M-49/P/S/1, dated 1 May 2015), which was noted by the Council at is Forty-Ninth Meeting. The Secretariat also gave a presentation in this regard. On 17 May 2015, the DAT began its ninth visit and will continue interviews and technical discussions on issues still requiring clarification. Further site visits and the taking of samples are also planned, depending on the security situation. The visit is expected to end on 29 May 2015.

11. Regarding the implementation of additional special monitoring measures in accordance with Notes EC-M-43/DG.1/Rev.1 (dated 21 July 2014) and EC-M-40/DG.2/Add.1 (dated 20 July 2014), the preparatory work necessary to install the monitoring equipment, such as constructing the base stations at the four underground structures, installing cables, training the operators, establishing the administrative and technical requirements, and so on, is now complete. Installation of the equipment at the first site is expected to begin at the end of May 2015, with the aim to begin testing the system at all four structures by the end of June 2015.

Supplementary resources

12. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remained unchanged from the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

13. The Director-General provided an update regarding the work of the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) at the Forty-Ninth Meeting of the Council, held on 7 May 2015. On 21 May, the Secretariat received a letter from the Syrian Arab Republic advising that they were willing to receive the FFM in Damascus. The team is preparing for deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic.

14. With regard to the recent allegations of use of toxic chemicals in Idlib province, the Director-General informed the Council that the FFM continues to examine all available information and will be guided in its work by Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2209 (2015).

Conclusion

15. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the destruction of the eight remaining CWPFs and on installing and operationalising the special remote monitoring system in the four underground structures. The DAT and the FFM will also continue their work in the Syrian Arab Republic.